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FOREST SERVICE

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REPLY TO: 5200 Forest Insect and Disease Control February 7, 1977

SUBJECT: F.A.T. - Mt. Pinos Ranger District

TO: Forest Supervisor, Los Padres N.F.

On December 9 and 10, in response to an October 5 request for assistance from Ranger Hammond, Ed Wood (Pathologist, FI&DM Staff, R.O.), John Wenz (Entomologist, FI&DM Staff, R.O.), and Susan Bullen (Trainee, University of California, Berkeley), examined the tree mortality situation in the Mill Potrero Organizational Camp and roadside area and in the Tecuya Mountain Timber Sale Area. They were accompanied by Glenn Davies (Timber Management Staff, R.O.), DeLoy Esplin (Resource Officer, S.O.) and Randy Long and Al Fiske (Mt. Pinos District).

The Mill Potrero area is characterized by Jeffrey pine in the overstory with localized pinyon pine in the understory. The Tecuya Mountain area varies from essentially pure pinyon pine to an overstocked pinyon - white fir - Jeffrey mix with some large, over-mature, white fir and Jeffrey pine in the overstory. The examination showed that in both locations the tree mortality was caused primarily by an insect-disease interaction: the root disease, Fomes annosus, and two insects, the California flatheaded borer, Melanophila californica (identified from larval galleries), and a pine engraver, Ips paraconfusus (two adult specimens identified). Another engraver, Ips pini, may also be involved. In addition, a few individual pinyon pine infested with what is probably the pinyon needle scale, Matsucoccus acalyptus, were noted.

On the morning of December 10, the two situations were discussed with Ranger Dave Hammond at the Chucupate R.S. Adequate, effective controls for such insect-disease pest complexes in forests managed primarily for recreation are not presently available.

Alternatives were discussed, with particular reference to the Mill Potrero Organizational Camp, which is viewed by the District as being fairly typical of their campground situations. One potential long-term approach considered was to convert the dominant species in the campground, Jeffrey pine, to a non-Fomes susceptible host, such as black oak. This should also reduce insect problems and at the same time provide adequate shading in the campground. Such an approach would have the advantage of directing emphasis at reducing or preventing insect and disease caused damage rather than attempting to treat a problem after the damage has already occurred.

The cost and funding of the Tecuya Mountain Timber Sale was also discussed and copies of the pertinent section (p. 2) of the December 1, 1976, 5230, 5240 memorandum to the Plumas National Forest concerning a Jeffrey pine beetle infestation were made available to the Mt. Pinos District. This clarified the conditions under which Forest Pest Control Act dollars can be used to support timber sales and further defined the steps and supporting documents, beginning with a Biological Evaluation, needed to request Forest Pest Control Act funds.

On December 9 and 10, in response to an October 1 request for Ranger Hammond indicated that some consideration would be given to a request for further assistance from FIDM, particularly for and Biological Evaluation. If such a request is received, FIDM will make the evaluation, thereby providing the appropriate biological and control-alternative information. The forest, then, will be able to evaluate the economic and environmental consequences of the alternatives and decide upon a course of action.

WILFRED L. FREEMAN, JR.
WILFRED L. FREEMAN, JR., Director
Forest Insect and Disease Management

JWenz:sdj
cc: G. Davies, TM
Director, Recreation